

Roundtable Expert Meeting & Conference on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders

Core Principles & Good Practices

BACKGROUND PAPER

February 2012

Introduction

With the growing recognition that al Qaeda and other likeminded groups cannot be defeated through military means alone, governments have been increasingly focused on developing more effective strategies to reduce the appeal of al Qaeda and limit its pool of potential recruits. By better understanding the radicalisation process and why people become terrorists it is possible to formulate the steps to take to counter dangerous violent extremist ideologies.

As part of the effort to counter violent extremism, there is an increasing focus on prisons, for several reasons. First, left unchecked, prisons provide a ‘safe haven’ where terrorists network compare and exchange tactics, recruit and radicalise new members, and even direct deadly operations outside the prison. Denying incarcerated terrorists the opportunity to influence non-terrorist inmates is especially important. Second, most imprisoned or detained extremists will eventually be released. In order to reduce the likelihood that these individuals will return to terrorism after release, it is essential to find ways to help them disengage from violent activities.

Finally, while prisons have at times been environments where radicalism has festered, the prison setting can also present opportunities for positive change – serving as a place where the tide of violent radicalism can be reversed. Prisoners live in a controlled environment, where they can be denied the negative influences from their past which pushed them toward terrorism. They can instead be surrounded by

persons who encourage them to pursue a more positive path. There are many examples of individuals who entered prison as extremists, were rehabilitated and were then released as enthusiastic messengers against violent extremist philosophies.

In recognition of the fact that prisons can be terrorism incubators or be institutions for reform, a number of governments have established prison-based rehabilitation programmes. These programmes are designed to rehabilitate both the terrorist foot soldiers and violent extremists, and reintegrate them back into society with a reduced risk of recidivism. While this is a promising development, it is critical that the countries and national officials engaged in these efforts share information about their efforts with the world community. While a one-size-fits-all approach is unlikely to work, knowing what other countries have tried, and what has succeeded or failed, can offer valuable lessons for governments as they work to build or improve their own programmes.

Although programmes must be tailored to the local conditions and cultures, there are a series of good practices that countries can consider, that can potentially serve as the foundation for their policies and programmes.

A Starting Point

The following sections will provide a brief overview of what are generally believed to be focal points of attention in rehabilitating and reintegrating violent extremist offenders. On the basis of existing research and experiences and insights from the field, a series of notes and good practices will be shared. Explicitly, the following sections are not intended to be the last word on rehabilitative programmes. The aim is to reflect briefly upon perspectives, approaches and viewpoints that might contribute to a better understanding of what works and does not work and necessary preconditions under which rehabilitation efforts are more – or less – likely to be successful. Also, the present discussion paper is not intended to offer a comprehensive overview of the issues relevant to the matter, or to identify golden rules in the development and implementation of rehabilitative initiatives. Rather, the intention is to provide a useful launch-pad for further discussion and analyses. It is hoped that participants in the conference and throughout the initiative will share their experiences and expertise, relate successful practices and build upon the material that follows.

Before turning to notes on principles and good practices, it is imperative to come to a common understanding of important terms.

Violent Extremism – Extremist groups operate on the fringe of accepted political spectra. According to the Crown Prosecution Service, violent extremism can be regarded as the demonstration of unacceptable behaviour by using any means of medium to express which foment, justify or glorify terrorist violence in furtherance of particular beliefs; seek to provoke others to terrorist acts; foment other serious criminal activity or seek to provoke others to serious criminal acts; or foster hatred which might lead to inter-community violence. Of course, different types of violent extremism may fester in prison. However, in the context of the contemporary discussion about challenges concerning prison radicalisation and rehabilitation of violent extremist offenders, violent Islamist extremism has been of prominent concern and will be a central focus in the UNICRI initiative. This does not negate the fact that significant expertise has been build up in rehabilitating and reintegrating other types of violent extremist, like right-wing and left-wing extremists – experiences that may provide useful indicators and good practices for this initiative.

Prison Radicalisation – According to the U.S. Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act, violent radicalisation is the process of adopting or promoting an extremist belief system for the purpose of facilitating ideologically based violence to advance political, religious, or social change. Prison radicalisation can therefore be seen as a process of radicalisation among the inmate populations. In addition to violent radicalisation among both terrorist and non-terrorist inmates, the conceptualisation of prison radicalisation also includes post-release radicalisation among former inmates who adopted religious or ideological belief systems in prison but only became radicalised after their release.

Incitement – In its response to the European Commission Consultation on Inciting, Abiding or Abetting Terrorist offences, the International Commission of Jurists considered that incitement to terrorism should involve a subjective intent to incite an act of terrorism; a causal link to a violent act of terrorism or an imminent risk of such an act; a clear link with a precise definition of terrorism; that the offence of incitement to terrorism should not extend to incitement to offences which are not directly linked to terrorism; and that the definition of incitement must not criminalise justification or glorification or terrorism.

Rehabilitation – Definitions of rehabilitation generally centre around three core concepts: 1) rehabilitation is a purposeful, planned intervention rather than an accidental occurrence; 2) which aims to change characteristics of the offender (attitudes, cognitive skills and processes, personality or mental health, and social, educational or vocational skills) that are believed to be the cause of the offenders criminal – or in the present discussion violent extremist – behaviour, and 3) which aims to reduce the chance that the individual will re-offend. In the context of rehabilitating violent extremist offenders, the offender’s ideological belief system plays an important role in the rehabilitation process. To what extent rehabilitation initiatives should prioritise changing extremist attitudes or extremist behaviour – or both – will be subject of further discussion during the conference and the larger initiative.

Disengagement and De-Radicalisation – The terrorism and violent extremism literature makes a distinction between disengagement and de-radicalisation, which can both occur at the individual as well as collective level. Individuals or movements disengage when they reduce or stop using violent methods. Disengagement may or may not involve de-radicalisation, which requires not only a change in behaviour but also a change in belief.

Reintegration – In broad terms, rehabilitation programmes aim to prepare inmates to return safely to society and live as law-abiding citizens. More specifically, reintegration includes a safe transition to the community as well as a change of attitudes and behaviour that led the individual to violent extremist activities in the first place.

The following elements are not discussed in a particular order of chronology or importance. Yet for the purpose of clarity, the principles and good practices will be clustered into different subsections, including 1) Goals and objectives; 2) Prison context; 3) The role of different actors in prisons, and 4) Reintegration components.

I. Defining Goals and Objectives

In developing purposeful, goal-oriented rehabilitation programmes, the first questions that need to be answered are what the goals of these programmes are, and how success can be defined and measured. Measurable objectives should be formulated that define which actors are involved in the initiative, what the desired outcomes are,

how progress is measured, and which specific outcomes are expected as a result of the intervention. In doing so, a few distinctions have to be taken into account.

- **Primary and Secondary Objectives** – In broad terms, rehabilitation can be interpreted as readying prisoners to re-entry society and to assist them to lead a good and productive life. However, in the context of rehabilitating offenders with a violent extremist background, additional objectives are relevant. For instance, it is important to discuss whether rehabilitation programmes should focus on de-radicalisation or on disengagement, and on individual or collective treatments.

While rehabilitation programmes are a key part of the effort to ensure that violent extremists do not return to a life of terrorism after they are released, it is equally important to ensure that the prisons themselves are not hotbeds of radicalisation. Poorly run prisons increase the odds that individuals will become radicalised during their incarceration and make it a difficult environment in which to develop a successful rehabilitation programme. Good prison standards and practices are essential, not only as a foundation for successful rehabilitation programmes, but also to detect, deter and disrupt terrorist activities. In fact, the humane treatment of prisoners not only helps prevent further radicalisation among the inmate population, but it can have an opposite and positive effect. Prisoners who expect to be treated poorly, or even be abused and tortured, will be pleasantly surprised by professional prisons staff. Exercising firm, fair and consistent rules that reflect the human rights of prisoners can gradually change their perception about the country holding them in custody. Learning that the government they have been fighting is humane and just can fuel reconciliation among violent extremists. As such, it is essential that correctional and law enforcement officers receive the necessary and appropriate training on how to treat and interact with inmates to avoid further radicalisation within the prison population.

- **Short Term and Long Term Objectives** – In the short run, rehabilitation programmes may seek to alter the behaviour of individuals and groups to secure safe transition into society and prevent future re-offending. In the longer run, these initiatives might ultimately seek to reduce the appeal of violent extremist ideologies and reduce the potential for further violence and

terrorism. During the conference and UNICRI initiative, other short term and long term objectives will be specified.

- **Identifying and measuring success** – When are rehabilitation programmes effective, and how should success be measured? In most countries, re-conviction rates are used to measure re-offending. However, there are limitations to these measures, which are particularly relevant for terrorism offenders. For example, not all re-offenders will be caught or prosecuted, and some individuals might travel abroad and be caught for terrorist activities there, without being included in the recidivism statistics in the country of rehabilitation. Also, it should be discussed how to account for former terrorists who refrain from violent extremist activities but are caught for unrelated offences, such as petty crime or domestic murder. What do such cases say about the effectiveness of rehabilitation efforts?
- **Potential Undesired Side-Effects** – In order to maximise the likelihood of success, it should be clearly defined what the principles are that distinguish between effective and ineffective programmes. It is imperative that countries incorporate sophisticated monitoring and evaluation mechanisms which are geared to measure the impact of rehabilitation programmes and detect potential undesired side-effects. The effectiveness of re-entry programmes can vary substantially based on cultural and institutional features as well as on individual characteristics of the offenders involved in the programme. What works in one country or for one person might not work for the other, or even produce unwanted results. For example, restrictions on individual and religious freedoms can easily be viewed by inmates as intrusive or discriminating. Such measures, albeit necessary in some cases, should be implemented carefully and thoughtfully to prevent hampering offenders' motivation to cooperate or, even worse, promote further radicalisation. Moreover, it would be worthwhile to discuss how to prevent and detect false rehabilitation, and to secure that resources invested in (ex-) prisoners or their communities are used legitimately and purposively.

II. Prison Context

- **International Standards** – Good prison standards and practices, as outlined in the United Nations Minimum Standard Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners

(1990), should be the starting point for building an effective, safe and smoothly operating prison environment. Counter-extremism and rehabilitation programmes have the best chance of succeeding when they are nested in a safe, secure and well operating custodial setting where the human rights of prisoners are respected. Some countries face substantial problems of prison overcrowding, lack of resources and deficient services. In developing effective responses, such problems need to be addressed. Good management also improves the safety of facility staff and other prisoners. Properly managing high risk criminals and terrorists reduces the opportunities for escape, collaborative mischief and inappropriate or dangerous external communications. Improving the prison environment and making prison life a less depriving experience for inmates can also help ensure that prisons do not become bastions of radicalisation.

- **Intake, Assessment & Classification** – The important first steps in correctional management begin when a new inmate enters the prison facility. This is especially true for terrorist prisoners. It is imperative that target populations of rehabilitation programmes are narrowly and unambiguously defined. Knowing as much as possible about the personal background, criminal history, personality traits, ideology and institutional behaviour of inmates is key in making classification decisions and in designing effective individual rehabilitation programmes. An essential first step in rehabilitation is accurate individual assessment of needs and risks, followed by a classification of the types of goals and required interventions. Different categories of prisoners may require different objectives and initiatives. Rehabilitative programmes should be tailor-made to fit the unique characteristics of, for example, convicted versus suspected terrorists, long-term versus short-term inmates, and of extremist leaders versus followers. For instance, whereas rehabilitative efforts for low-risk prisoners might involve extensive engagement of fellow inmates and external communities, programmes for high-risk prisoners need to be adapted to a more extensive security context and may require less involvement of third parties. Similarly, some individuals might radicalise or improperly influence other inmates, including non-terrorists. In some cases, it might be required to segregate such individuals by assigning them to separate housing units in order to deny

violent extremists the opportunity to influence vulnerable prisoners in the general population. In addition, prisons should also assess during the intake process which individuals are suitable candidates for rehabilitation programmes and which are not. Not every terrorist can be rehabilitated – those who cannot be reformed are often referred to as “irreconcilables”.

- **Facilities** – An important issue for discussion is the question of whether the prisoners going through rehabilitation programmes should be integrated in the ordinary inmate population or whether they should be housed in separate prison facilities. There are advantages and disadvantages to both alternatives. On the one hand, separating this group from the general population makes them easier to manage and reduces the risk of malign influencing. Moreover, necessary resources including extra security measures and training for instructors and specialist personnel are only needed in a limited number of locations. On the other hand, integrating extremist offenders among other categories of inmates prevents the formation of tight groups and confronts extremists with alternative perspectives and ideas that might contribute to their de-radicalisation. Again, there are no uniform standards and what works best depends on the individual characteristics and needs of the inmates involved in the rehabilitation programmes. In general, non-contact visiting facilities are recommended for high security terrorist prisoners to reduce the passing of contraband and inappropriate messages. Segregating irreconcilables also facilitates management and may be necessary to ensure that they do not radicalise non-terrorist in the prison. While in most countries inmates are frequently moved to different institutions to deal with structural overcrowding, it is important to realise that frequent transfers cause disruption to rehabilitation efforts. Transfers should thus be limited and effectively managed to minimise their impact on the rehabilitation and reintegration process. UNICRI can assist countries in raising the funds from the international community for needed facilities, when countries do not have the resources necessary to undertake these projects on their own.
- **Staff training** – It is imperative that individuals who are professionally involved with extremist offenders are appropriately trained and educated to understand and deal with the complexities of reintegration and rehabilitation efforts. Prison staff and professionals involved in rehabilitation programmes need to

be trained to distinguish signs of radicalisation from legitimate religious or free speech activities, communicate in a constructive and conflict-avoiding way, and respond appropriately to a potential extremist threat.

- **Inmate Communications** – Maintaining control over the inmate's communication, both within and outside the prison, is critically important. Prison officials must limit or restrict contact between the general population and specific segments of the prison population, especially dangerous prisoners. It is also important that prison officials monitor and in some circumstances control the inmate's communication with persons outside the prison or visitors coming to the prison. This may apply to family visitors, telephone calls, mail or email. Although the number of terrorist attempts originating in prison is unclear, there have been documented cases where prisoners have planned and directed deadly terrorist operations from the inside. Prison officials will want to detect, deter and disrupt all communications that would benefit the terrorist cause.

III. The Role of Different Actors in Prisons

- **Psychologists** – Psychologists play a key role in the rehabilitation process and should be fully integrated into these programmes. Psychologists can help identify factors in the social context and psychological make-up which made the individual vulnerable to militant ideology and the motivational factors that contributed to his decision to commit violent acts. This information helps to inform the classification process and to design an individualised rehabilitation plan for a prisoner.
- **Clerics** – Clerics (imams or Islamic scholars) also play an important role in the rehabilitation process, particularly given the shallow knowledge of Islam that is frequently found among jihadists. Clerics who have studied al Qaeda and other extremist ideologies can easily and effectively refute the violent jihadist rhetoric by pointing to the more moderate and tolerant written words of the Quran, sunnah and hadith. A cleric who comes from the same tribal, ethnic and linguistic groups of the terrorists is often more effective than those from different segments of the community. The same often holds true for clerics from other faiths.

- **Prison Officers** – As the personnel in most frequent contact with the inmates, it is important that prison officers understand and are carefully attuned to the rehabilitation process, even if they are not directly responsible for its delivery. It is particularly important that prison officials and supervising officers avoid actions that undermine the rehabilitation process. Officers must receive the necessary training on professional conduct, prisoner rights, inmate rules and responsibilities, and how to supervise prisoners by employing firm, fair and consistent techniques. Prison staff must have a thorough understanding of and appreciate the important role they play to support the rehabilitation process.
- **Law Enforcement Officials** – Law enforcement officials may need to interview selected detainees and inmates on various counter-terrorism related matters, perhaps even while the detainee is still completing the rehabilitation process. As with the prison officers, it is important that the law enforcement officials do not inadvertently interfere with the rehabilitation progress inmates are making. Law enforcement officers should receive training which enables them to navigate this delicate area successfully. While it will need to be done carefully and in close consultation with those overseeing the inmate's rehabilitation, there may be opportunities for law enforcement officers to discuss in more detail with the prisoner what motivated them to go down the terrorist path. This type of information is not only key in improving our overall understanding of radicalisation, but in helping shape the programme designed to draw the individual inmate out. Beyond the rehabilitation process, it is also important for law enforcement officers to receive specialised training in how to avoid inadvertently becoming a radicalising influence within local communities. Studies and operational experience strongly suggest that abuse and mistreatment by these agents can produce this unintended effect and seriously undermine counter-terrorism goals.
- **Intelligence Collections Agents** – Rehabilitation practitioners and those who collect intelligence information must regularly coordinate their activities at both the managerial and individual levels and de-conflict the interactive techniques that may be used in parallel within a prison. The scheduling of interrogations and programming activities, for example, should be carefully considered, weighing both the operational needs and the possibility of engendering

confusion for the prisoners. Methods, styles of interaction and specific objectives to be achieved with prisoners must be discussed in detail to ensure that they do not mutually interfere or create counterproductive circumstances. Inmates must understand the different purposes of intelligence collectors and rehabilitation staff. They should be reminded of the confidentiality involved in rehabilitation programmes. Psychological data are routinely confidential and cannot be shared with intelligence entities unless an explicit and significant threat is exposed that would make this information essential from a public safety perspective. Inmates will not be as open or trusting if they believe that information they share with psychologists or clerics is immediately shared with interrogators. Intelligence collectors often offer incentives to gain information. That is seldom the case in psychological interviews. The methods and styles of these differing interactions with prisoners should be discussed by rehabilitation practitioners and intelligence collectors to ensure they do not mutually interfere.

- **Victims** – The victims of terrorist violence can be powerful voices within rehabilitation programmes. Not only can victim-perpetrator contact contribute to the physical and psychological well-being of the victims, it might also be beneficial for the perpetrators. Hearing first-hand how their violence tragically impacts ordinary citizens might evoke a mind-shift in violent extremist inmates. Moreover, being forgiven for past transgressions might reduce psychological tension and motivate the inmate to renounce violent extremist ideologies. It is important to carefully consider when, how and which victims should be introduced, so that inmates are most receptive to their messages and potential negative side-effects for the victims are minimal.
- **Former Violent Extremists** – Reformed extremists, particularly those who have been through the rehabilitation process themselves, may be influential with inmates participating in these programmes. The testimonials of repentant terrorists can be dramatic evidence of the benefits of change. In the case of al Qaeda, the writings of former operatives and supporters who have turned away from the group are also a powerful testament to how misguided its ideology is, and could be incorporated into the rehabilitation dialogue.
- **Charismatic Members of the Community** – Celebrities and other influential personalities from the community can also help inspire change among

prisoners. The motivational themes and public service messages they deliver can be quite captivating and effective. Where possible, they should be integrated into the rehabilitation programmes.

IV. Reintegration Components

- **Psychological and Behavioural Therapy** – Behavioural and cognitive skills programmes are an essential element of rehabilitation efforts. In addition to mental health support, cognitive behavioural programmes should be developed that assist offenders in defining the issues that pushed them towards violent extremist behaviours in the first place and subsequently in formulating objectives and identifying and implementing solutions.
- **Education** – Basic education including literacy courses, basic math, history and civics can open up a world of understanding for prisoners and end their reliance upon other persons who tell them what to think. Improving the prisoner’s educational abilities will increase their self-esteem, self-confidence, chances and status within their communities. Education is often a direct antidote to the malign, violent extremist messages from their terrorist past.
- **Vocational Skills Training & Employment Assistance** – To successfully reintegrate back into society, it is critically important that the detainee be employable and able to support his family. Employment reduces the need and the appeal to re-join a terrorist group and strengthens the former detainee’s reintegration into society. As such, vocational skills training and employment assistance are important components of a rehabilitation programme. Installing liaison between the prison service and employment services could be beneficial in matching the vocational skills training to the employment market of the community and country the inmate will return to.
- **Certification** – Prisons may wish to recognise the achievement of inmates who have completed education and vocational training programmes with graduation ceremonies. This practice gives the inmate a sense of accomplishment and underscores the importance of what they have done to turn their lives around. Awarding certificates for graduation also sheds a positive light on their incarceration by highlighting positive milestones, instead of focusing on the punitive aspects of their prison time. Moreover, at different stages in the rehabilitation trajectory, prisoners could be required to certify that

they have met certain educational, vocational, assessment and experience requirements as a prerequisite to obtain more freedom or privileges. Upon release, a rehabilitation certificate could be issued that restores civil rights, serves as proof that the inmate has been rehabilitated, and ends employment and occupational licensing discrimination.

- **Licence Conditions** – Under any circumstances, license conditions should serve the protection of society and should be geared to facilitate successful reintegration into the community and to prevent recidivism. In this respect, another notable point of discussion should be the question whether and under what circumstances extremist offenders might be eligible for flexible and lenient licence conditions (e.g. sentence reduction) when they participate cooperatively in rehabilitation programmes.
- **Financial Support** – In addition to education and vocational skills training, countries with the adequate resources should consider providing financial support to reformed terrorists upon their release in order to support their families until employment is found. Otherwise, detainees may feel that they have no choice but to return to the folds of a terrorist group, which will undoubtedly be offering them much-needed financial assistance. Monitoring mechanisms could be installed to secure that financial resources are spent legitimately.
- **Aftercare Programme** – For a rehabilitation programme to be successful, the treatment cannot end once the inmate has left the prison. Developing a robust and effective aftercare programme demonstrates continuing good will and provides an important support structure that will help keep the former inmate from drifting back to violent extremist activities.
- **Post-Release Monitoring** – Formal or informal, parole-like monitoring is an effective method to prevent recidivism. It supports and reinforces any pre-release agreements or contracts the inmate has agreed to. Monitoring also provides data that can be used to determine the effectiveness of rehabilitation programmes.
- **Families** – Families play an integral role in the success of the rehabilitation programmes and are particularly instrumental after release in keeping the detainee from returning to a life of terrorism. As such, the scope of the rehabilitation programmes should include inmate family members. The family

must understand and be sympathetic to what the detainee is going through and able to provide a supportive environment for the detainee once he is released. Countries that have the adequate resources to do so may wish to consider providing financial support for the family members, particularly when the prisoner is the family's major bread-winner, so that they do not have to rely on a terrorist group for support during the period of incarceration and beyond.

- **Communities** – Beyond a detainee's immediate family, the broader community is also important in setting the detainee on a path towards successful reintegration. This is particularly true in countries where tribes and clans play a dominant role in communities. Having a welcoming environment for the detainee – where the former inmate is accepted back into the community and where neighbours are helping ease their transition – is critically important. Encouraging community members to do informal post-release monitoring and counselling also reduces the possibilities for recidivism.

A Word on General Principles and Good Practices

The UNICRI / ICCT – The Hague Expert Meeting and Conference on Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Violent Extremist Offenders, held in The Hague from 6 to 9 December 2011, attracted a total of approximately 90 leading experts and government officials from more than 25 countries around the world. During four days of lively discussion and debate, the event focused on identifying the guiding principles in rehabilitating and re-integrating violent extremist offenders and on how to further expand the capacity building initiative to provide assistance to countries dealing with the matter at hand. During those four days, the conference provided a forum for practitioners, scholars and government officials to exchange insights and expertise, to discuss challenges and opportunities and to make recommendations for the future, which will play an important part in influencing discussion on rehabilitation of violent extremist offenders and in giving further shape to the UNICRI / ICCT initiative.

Essentially, the most important and outstanding conclusion of the conference may very well be that there is no one-size fits all approach. The wide variety of backgrounds of the experts available, together with the advanced level of debate

secured an equally broad and high-level quality output of principles, notes and practices. Any attempt to summarise the key findings and most important conclusions that came forward throughout the expert meeting and the conference would do no justice to the complexity of the matter and the level of sophistication of the discussions. Rather, doing so would fail to appreciate the incredible amount of knowledge that has been created, shared and accumulated over time and which will provide an invaluable foundation for the analysis, development and implementation of future work. At best, a preliminary attempt can be made to derive a few commonly accepted themes from the diverse abundance of literature, expertise and knowledge currently available.

Firstly, it becomes clear that any effort to rehabilitate and reintegrate violent extremist offenders should be holistic, culture-specific and tailored to the relevant contexts and individuals. It is well understood that rehabilitation programmes can only be effective if the aims and ambitions are clearly and unambiguously articulated – albeit customised to the different institutional, cultural or social context in which they are applied. For each programme, whether the core focus is on disengagement or on de-radicalisation, on individual or collective interventions, it is of profound importance that the primary and secondary goals and objectives, both for the short run and the longer run, are defined as narrowly and unambiguously as possible. Only when the relationship between the intervention on the one hand, and the expected outcomes and results on the other are clearly specified can the necessary evaluation mechanisms be incorporated that facilitate measuring success and failure of the programme.

Secondly, in order to be successful it is imperative that any rehabilitation effort is embedded in a coherent, well organised institutional infrastructure. That is, it is vital to create between all the actors and institutions involved a shared sense of reality which encompasses a common understanding of the goals, language, division of responsibilities, and interlinking partnerships and agreements. Again, which partners will be involved and in what capacity might differ across programmes and countries. Yet the development and implementation of each rehabilitation programme requires a joint effort by a wide range of actors, who each contribute unique expertise and skills at different phases and stages of the process. For such a complex enterprise to be

successful, a sense of ownership and well structured cooperation is a necessary precondition.

Lastly, in giving further shape to the UNICRI/ICCT initiative and providing accurate aid to countries requesting assistance, it is critical to be sensitive to achievements and lessons in the past, present and future, as well as experience in different areas (e.g. in Disarmament, Demobilization & Reintegration processes in post-conflict situations) and with different types of violent offenders (e.g. prison gangs). If the conference made one thing clear, it is that an incredible amount of relevant knowledge and expertise has been accumulated over the past few decades and across different fields and areas. Crucially, preventing re-invention of the wheel requires an analytical and pragmatic approach to identify the applicability of (elements from) programmes implemented in different times, in different contexts and on different movements. Much can be learned from looking at a wide variety of experiences with demobilisation of violent extremist movements, including gangs, sects, and politically motivated movements. In doing so, the challenge lies in moving beyond merely recognising and acknowledging differences and similarities, and to identify and select the key principles that may be transferrable and implementable across contexts – and which can be useful for the development and implementation of future rehabilitation initiatives.



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